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ABSTRACT

Educational restructuring is influencing the change in names of vocational education specialty areas as well as the change in course offerings for the specialties. In some schools, the name "vocational education" has been replaced with new names more reflective of the school's restructuring efforts. Within a given area, new courses are being added to reflect the advent of new technologies and management practices in the workplace. Guiding school restructuring efforts is the knowledge that skills required for employment should be taught in courses in which the content is allied with real world living and working. Spearheading the restructuring of courses and course requirements for vocational education is the integration of academic and vocational programs. School organizational and vocational education restructuring efforts have resulted in the initiation of a number of innovative instructional practices besides the integration of academic and vocational education. For example, Connecticut educators have introduced several such practices: interdisciplinary curriculum, chemistry with computers, principles of technology, authentic assessment-mathematics, science-math-technical curriculum, portfolio assessment, total quality management techniques, "green wave" enterprises, and multilevel classes. (Contains 14 annotated print resources on restructuring in vocational education for adult, career, and vocational educators.) (YLB)

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Restructuring and Vocational Education
Trends and Issues Alerts

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TRENDS AND ISSUES ALERTS

by Bettina A. Lankard

1996

Restructuring and Vocational Education

Look in the course catalog of any high school or postsecondary institution today and you will be hard pressed to find some of the familiar vocational education specialty areas you knew in the past. Agriculture education is now called food and agricultural sciences. Home economics has disappeared into human ecology or family and consumer sciences. In some schools, the name vocational education has been replaced with new names that are more reflective of the school's restructuring efforts. For example, the Jefferson County Public Schools have adopted the name "career and technical education" to replace "vocational education" (Kyle 1995). Educational restructuring is influencing the change in course offerings for the specialties as well. Within a given area, new courses are being added to reflect the advent of new technologies and management practices in the workplace.

Guiding school restructuring efforts is the knowledge that skills required for employment should be taught in courses in which the content is allied with real world living and working. Kyle (1995) reports on one major effort of the Jefferson County Public Schools, "the restructuring of vocational education—with an emphasis on work force preparation and school-to-work and postsecondary educational transitions" (p. 9). The former system of part-time, 2-year vocational education centers was phased out and replaced with 4-year magnet career academies, based on the identified needs of companies in the region and projected growth industries. The identified areas of focus for these career academies include public safety, aviation, and advanced manufacturing technologies, health services, and construction technology. According to Kyle (1995), "each academy is developing an integrated academic and technical curriculum, requires a demonstration of advanced proficiencies for graduation, and offers students a variety of transition and student support services. All students will have some form of internship, apprenticeship, or cooperative education experience" (p. 12).

Spearheading the restructuring of courses and course requirements for vocational education is the integration of academic and vocational programs. According to Bragg (1994), "the predominant curriculum reform strategy underway is to add applied academics (commercially or locally developed) to existing curricula or replace existing courses with applied academics" (p. 5). Business, industry, and school leaders are working together to develop curriculum standards to upgrade the quality of vocational courses. For example, in the Craftsman 2000 Apprenticeship Program in Tulsa, the public schools, seven industries, Tulsa Technology Center, and Tulsa Junior College collaboratively design and deliver an integrated program for metalworking apprentices (Bottoms 1993).

School organizational and vocational education restructuring efforts have resulted in the initiation of a number of innovative instructional practices besides the integration of academic and vocational education. Connecticut educators, for example, have introduced several such practices: interdisciplinary curriculum, chemistry with computers, principles of technology, authentic assessment-mathematics, science-math-technical curriculum, portfolio assessment, total quality management techniques, 'green wave' enterprises, and multilevel classes (***Educating for High Performance*** 1993). The following resources contain relevant information about restructuring in vocational education that will be of interest to adult, career, and vocational educators.

Print Resources

Bamford, P. J. "Success by Design—The Restructuring of a Vo-Tech Center." ***Tech Directions*** 54, no. 7 (February 1995): 15-17.

Describes how an integrated program to ensure four provisions for all learners transformed a vocational-technical center in Michigan. The four provisions described are (1) involvement in applying academic skills with occupational skills; (2) expanded opportunities to develop employability skills; (3) linkages with business and industry, and (4) career guidance.

Bottoms, G. ***Redesigning and Refocusing High School Vocational Studies.*** Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board-State Vocational Education Consortium, 1993. (ED 374 346)

Presents insights about the changing nature of the workplace and the need for upgraded standards of what to teach and what to expect of students in high shcool vocational courses.

Bragg, D. D. "Emerging Tech Prep Models: Promising Approaches to Educational Reform." ***Centerfocus no. 5.*** Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, June 1994. (ED 371 142)

Describes the fundamental components of tech prep and the main emerging tech prep models: pre-tech prep, adult tech prep, integrated tech prep, work-based tech prep, and the tech prep baccalaureate degree.

Clark, D. et al. ***What Are the Greatest Challenges Facing Education Today? AACC Forum: Trend Watch.*** Hermosa Beach, CA: American Association for Career Education, 1994. (ED 383 822)

Presents a list of the greatest challenges facing career educators today: (1) engaging the employment community within a formal, broad-based structure such as an industry-education council or alliance; (2) involving industry in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of career education staff development/inservice programs, and curriculum

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development; and (3) stressing curriculum relevance to work and leisure.

Educating for High Performance. Hartford: Connecticut Business and Industry Association, Connecticut State Council on Vocational-Technical Education, and Connecticut Department of Education, 1993. (ED 360 524)

Describes 46 change efforts undertaken to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn at high levels and succeed in a high performance economy.

Gugerty, J. "Making Tech Prep and School to Work Realistic Options in Transition Planning." Paper presented at the Annual International Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children, Indianapolis, IN, 1995. (ED 384 197)

Provides information on tech prep education programs that prepare students with technological competencies to work in a field such as engineering technology, agriculture, health, or business.

Kyle, R. M. J. *School-to-Work Transition and Its Role in the Systemic Reform of Education: The Experience of Jefferson County, Kentucky, and the Kentucky Education Reform Act.* Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development, National Institute for Work and Learning, 1995. (ED 381 669)

Examines Jefferson County Public School's approach toward school-to-work transition as part of educational reform. Describes several models of career/technical education restructuring and magnet career academies.

Little, J. W. "What Teachers Learn in High School: Professional Development and the Redesign of Vocational Education." *Education and Urban Society* 17, no. 3 (May 1995): 274-293.

Examines teachers' opportunities to learn and describes ways in which the workplace context of teaching supports impedes curriculum integration between vocational and academic education.

Lynch, R. L. et al. "Redirecting Secondary Vocational Education toward the 21st Century." *Journal of Vocational Education Research* 19, no. 2 (1994): 95-116.

Identifies eight themes: guaranteed access to education, training, and employment; meaningful participation; orientation to work; academic-vocational integration; employer and community responsibility for employability development; assessment; policy guidance; and improved teacher training and staff development.

Pirozzoli, D. "Restructuring Student Experiences Using Tech Prep Mapping to Integrate Vocational and Academic Curriculum." Paper presented at the Summer Institute on Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success, Madison, WI, June 1993. (ED 363 386)

Describes the Tech Prep Mapping process and the structural changes that need to occur with the school district's board and central office administration, the school principal's office, and among teaching staff to use the process for school restructuring.

Pritz, S. G. *The Role of Vocational Education in the Development of Students' Academic Skills. Information Series no. 340.* Columbus: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1989. (ED 326 692)

Highlights the current focus on integration of academic skills and vocational skills as a response to educational reform movements.

Ramsey, K. A. "The New Vocationalism in Urban School Reform." *Education and Urban Society* 27, no. 3 (May 1995): 260-273.

Discusses the environmental changes moving vocational education reform to the center of general education reform. Highlights the mutual adaptive results between organizational reforms, such as theme schools, and vocational reforms such as curricular integration. Presents lessons for advancing vocational reforms in urban settings.

Stern, D. et al. *Research on School-to-Work Transition Programs in the United States.* Berkeley: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1994. (ED 369 923)

Describes school-to-work transition program and presents the main ideas for improving the school-to-work system: integrating occupational and academic curricula, linking school with structured work experience, and creating formal connections between secondary and postsecondary education.

Williams, R. P., and Yeomans, D. J. "The Technical and Vocational Education Initiative and School Autonomy in the Management of Curriculum Change." *Research Papers in Education* 9, no. 3 (October 1994): 303-319.

Describes the British government's Technical and Vocational Education Initiative and evaluates its effectiveness in managing curriculum change.

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